THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI); Ministry of Industries have issued a letter of intent to M/s. Alkabeer Ltd., Rudraram village, Tehsil Pacaneheru Mandal, Distt. Medak (Andhra Pradesh) for processing buffalo meat for the purpose of export. According to this letter, the firm is authorised to slaughter only the old and useless buffaloes.

Programmes to meet the problem presented by ozone hole glasshouse effect and acid rains

716. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

Whether it is a fact that India is not fully geared yet to meet the colossal problem presented by Ozone Hole, glasshouse effect and Acid Rains and if so, what time bound programmes have been drawn up to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): Though there is scientific evidence to the effect that depletion of the Ozone layer leads to skin cancer, eye diseases and immune deficiencies in human beings and animals besides other adverse effects on human and plant life, there is no scientific observation of either a significant depletion of the ozone layer or the existence of a ozone hole over India.

The Government have set up an Expert Advisory Committee to analyse the impact of the greenhouse effect and its implications for India,

There are no confirmed reports of any incidence of acid rain in India. The free dust in the atmosphere has a buffering action which neutralizes the acidity of precipitation over India. The efforts made by the Government and the Industries to control air pollution from industries also keeps in check the possibility of industrial pollutants producing acid rain in the country.

Environment pollution in Delhi

717. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government attention has been drawn to the most revealing newsre-port by Neelam Mathews in Network of October, 1990 concerning Delhi which has emerged as the fourth most polluted city in the World as per a WHO study;

(b) whether as a first step Government would eliminate tetralead from petrol as is being done in the West by addition of 10-20 per cent alcohol and as was being done in India during World War II; and

(c) whether a Task Force of concerned health NGOs and citizens would be set up in Delhi to serve as a v/atch-dog on environment pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ministry of Petroleum has been asked to bring down the lead content in petrol to 0. 15 gm|litre by April, 1993.

(c) There is no proposal to have such a task force to serve as a watch-dog on en vironmental pollution. However, an Envi ronmental Protection Council has been set up by the Delhi Administration prima rily to review the work relating to environ mental protection and to advise on envi ronmental issues. This Council has repre sentatives of NGOs on it.

National Park in the Country

718. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some more national parks in the country have been put on IUCNs threatened list and if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps proposed in this regard (Times of India dated the 30th November, 1990); and

(b) whether it is also a fact that a i number of the medicinal plants have be-

come extinct in the country and if so, the remedial steps taken/proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) (i) Two national parks are being considered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) for additions to the Register for the world's Threatened Protected Areas because of reasons shown below, which are consdiered by the IUCN as threats to these national park:

Name of the National Park	Threats considered by IUCN
(1) Kaziranga National Park..	. Proposed upstream Oil Refinery.
2) GulfofKutch(Marine National Park..	Removal of mangroves, land-based industrial pollution, over-fishing, oil from ships.

(ii) As regards the Kaziranga National Park, there is a proposal to set up an refinery near it. But no final decision has been taken by Government of India in this regard.

(iii) As regards the Gulf of Kutch Marine National Park, there is a developing industrail complex in and around the Sikka Port, a part of which has been included in the park. The proposals for new industrial projects in the area, wheih are referred to Government of India for clearance, are approved only after a thorough assessment of their likely impact on the Marine National Park has ben made. The State Government of Gujarat has also taken several measures to protect the Marine Park e. g., ban on oyster fishing, removal of mangrove wood, stoppage of extraction of sand and corals from the park, etc. and imposition of restrictions on 'dumping of brine waste in the sea around the park. The Government of India has also been requesting the State Government from time to time to take measures to protect the Marine National Park form the adverse impact of the local industrial activities and to monitor the movement of ships within the area of the park.

(b) The informaion is being collcted and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Waiting list of Telephones in Hubli Exchange

719. SHRI J. P. JAVALI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hubli telephone exchange has a waiting list of about 5000 applications; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to wipe out this list?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) The waiting list as on November, 90 is 3432.

(b) (i) A 3000 lines main exchange is likely to be commissioned by December, 1991.

(ii) This exchange is proposed to be expanded from 3000 to 5500 lines during the 8th Five Year Plan which would wipe out the present waiting list progressively.

Four-laning of Ahmedabad-Bombay National Highway

720. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal for four-laning of existing Ahmedabad-Bombay National Highway;